Neighborhood Traffic Calming Workshop Series

COCONUT GROVE NEIGHBORHOOD

October 1998

Honolulu, Hawaii

Prepared for the Department of Transportation Services

By Walkable Communities, Inc.

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Report Prepared:	October 16, 1998

Rev. 2/99

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The Traffic Calming Process

Traffic calming the Coconut Grove Neighborhood began as a partnership between Council Member **John Henry Felix** and the Department of Transportation Services (DTS). A sector of the neighborhood was chosen that had expressed concern with traffic speeds and volumes.

In August, 1998, Coconut Grove residents met with a professional traffic calming team and the City and County of Honolulu's DTS staff to identify traffic problems and solutions. Following input received from these residents, expert engineers studied the area, prepared a report, and developed conceptual drawings.

Using a report format, citizens then gave their final recommendations. The consultant made an added study, modified the drawings, and prepared them as an element of this final report.

Disclaimer

The contents of this report represents the knowledge, experience, and expertise of the citizens and authors in providing ideas and concepts to improve safety, access, mobility and livability through traffic calming and traffic management strategies. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation. The decision to use a particular device or treatment at a particular location should be made on the basis of an engineering study of the location. This report is not a substitute for sound engineering judgement.

Mayor: Jeremy Harris
Council Members:

Dr. Duke Bainum
John Desoto
John Henry Felix
Mufi Hannemann
Steve Holmes
Rene Mansho
Andy Mirikitani
Donna Kim
Jon Yoshimura

Workshop

On August 11, 1998, Walkable Communities, in cooperation with DTS, conducted a charrette-style workshop at the Kainalu Elementary School Cafeteria in the Coconut Grove neighborhood. Council Member John Henry Felix welcomed the audience at the 7 P.M. meeting. He discussed the problems associated with automobiles in neighborhoods. Deputy Director Joe Magaldi also addressed the group, explaining that the Consultants and DTS were present to listen to the concerns of residents and to solicit their help in finding solutions.

Neighborhood Visions

The audience expressed a desire for the following elements to be represented in their neighborhood during the next twenty years:

- Sense of community
- Strengthen community aspects of neighborhood
- More friendly
- Open spaces
- Peaceful oasis
- Peaceful and livable
- Quieter, calmer streets
- Safe, secure, and quiet
- Charming and comfortable
- Safe to bike and to walk
- User friendly, sense of place, low rise
- Sense of community, walkable
- Pedestrian friendly
- Family oriented: Ohana and friendly
- Places to walk to: corner markets, parks
- Traffic controlled and slow
- Beautification
- Bring the bay and ocean into the community

Problems and Concerns

Following a slide show depicting a number of traffic calming devices available and an overview of types of problems seen here and in other areas, the audience was asked to identify the problems in their neighborhood. They listed the following items:

1. Chaos caused by vehicles and pedestrians where Kaha Street and Kaipii Street dead-ends; the soccer field is used with no permit required, which invites excessive use.

2. Oneawa Street:
   a. Freeway on-ramp is problematic.
   b. No safe place to walk.
   c. Hard to cross the street.
   d. Congestion forces traffic onto side streets.
   e. Moderate bicycle and pedestrian use without adequate facilities.
   f. H-3 Freeway turned Oneawa Street into a major feeder street.
   g. Traffic from the H-3 Freeway backs up onto Oneawa Street.
   h. Cars are stopped by buses picking up and dropping off passengers. One person pointed out that this is an effective strategy to slow drivers.
   j. Pedestrian button at Kuulei Road doesn't actuate signal.
   k. Right lane drops in front of Andy's Drive Inn, causing people to speed up and cut off drivers to get into the through lane.

3. Kainalu Drive:
   a. Bike lane markings are disappearing at intersections.
   b. Speeding.

4. Kihapai & Kaipii Streets:
   a. Speeding.
   b. No sidewalks.
   c. Stop signs ignored.
   d. Very serious noise and heavy traffic.
   e. Teenage drivers under the influence of alcohol.
   f. Drug dealers.

5. Kaipii Street:
   a. Too narrow.
   b. No walkways.
   c. Trees block visibility.
   d. Cars speed.
   e. No speed limit signs.
   f. On-street parking reduces available roadway width and site lines.

6. Kailua Road:
   a. Speeding motorcycles.
   b. Cars use the bike lanes by the fire station to cut the corner at a high speed.
   c. Grass sidewalks need to be improved.
   d. Sewer repairs on Kalaheo Avenue will cause more problems.

7. Maluniu Avenue:
   a. Too narrow.
   b. Speeding.
   c. No sidewalks.
   d. Limited line of sight.

8. Hooulu and Halela Streets.

9. Keaniani Street is used as a cut through between Oneawa Street and Maluniu Avenue.

10. Newly installed 4-Way Stop at Kaha Street & Kainalu Drive intersection diverts traffic to other streets.

11. People ignore stop signs.

12. Keaniani Street is used as a shortcut when cars are backed up at adjacent street.

13. Fix Oneawa Street so Kihapai Street is not so busy.

Group Reports

The audience was divided into groups and instructed to brainstorm possible solutions for the various problems discussed earlier. The groups then presented suggestions, which are summarized below:

1. Widen Pali Highway to relieve congestion on Oneawa Street.
2. Make Oneawa Street one way. Make it narrow so only local traffic would go on that street.
3. Eliminate traffic lights at end of Oneawa Street and install roundabouts.
4. Ban large trucks from some areas of the city.
5. Kalaheo Avenue needs two or three stop signs.
6. To fix Kihapai and Kaha Streets: install roundabouts and medians.
7. Kalaheo High School is one of the problems since residents have to wait to get from Kaha Street onto Kainui Drive - divert some high school traffic; synchronize signals; modify school opening.
15. Provide covered bus shelters.
16. Make Coconut Grove more walkable and beautiful so people will not use their cars for every trip.
17. Redesign Kihapai Street.
18. Improve visibility at Halela and Hooulu Streets.
19. Add speed humps.
20. Install another bridge over the channel.
21. Convert some streets to one way.
22. Connect bikeways.
23. Fix intersection at Andy's Drive-Inn.
24. Traffic circles at Kihapai Street, Uluniu Street, and Oneawa Street to eliminate the 3-cycle light that backs up traffic on Oneawa Street.

Site Inspections

The team first toured the neighborhood to review the conditions with representatives from the community. Following the neighborhood meeting, another site inspection was undertaken to review the community concerns with a community leader and to review the feasibility of some of the suggestions. A subsequent site meeting was also undertaken on a Saturday morning with a resident representative to review the sites that were mentioned and to show the other areas of concern. After preparation of some proposed designs several other sites inspections were undertaken to refine the designs before presenting them to the community.

General Notes:

1. Each recommendation contributes to a more comfortable environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, property owners and motorists. Some motorists will be noticeably slowed, while others will see a minor change in their speed. In some corridors where stop signs are removed, many residents may see their overall travel times improved.

2. Traffic calming is employed to change driver behavior to make them more considerate of other road users and property owners. Children and seniors are especially impacted by inappropriate motorist behavior.

3. Residents need to be reminded that often, they are the ones that are speeding and generating too many trips, leading to high volumes of traffic and noise in their neighborhood. Since residents use their streets more than anyone else does, any changes have more impact on residents than outsiders.

4. Effective traffic calming requires these specific recommended measures to be made as an overall package. Building just one or several features may cause new traffic patterns that create new problems on these or other streets.

5. Proper landscaping and maintenance of the recommended devices is imperative. If traffic calming devices are designed in a "cheap" fashion or they become ugly over time, they will erode the confidence of the public in having traffic calming features installed on these or other neighborhood streets.

6. Traffic calming requires a six-week to six-month break-in period. Most people adapt to the devices within a day. A transition in behavior occurs. Residents should receive a notice that changes are being made. Literature can be developed pointing out the benefits to the entire neighborhood of a neighborhood traffic calming program in selected areas. If significantly new practices are expected, such as the use of the first roundabout in the neighborhood, a simple graphic and paragraph on how to drive through the device will prove helpful. Benefits of the device for pedestrians and bicyclists can also be provided.

7. Traffic calming does not solve all traffic, access, mobility, noise, safety and livability problems in a neighborhood. All residents should be reminded that they must remain or become active in evaluating their traffic conditions.

8. Neighborhood associations and city programs such as the Safe Communities initiative conducted by the Honolulu Police Department can help educate residents about their responsibilities when using the streets. Printed materials, public service announcements, and media coverage are just a few of the methods that can be used to educate the public.

9. The recommended changes will bring nearly 85% of drivers into safe and prudent driving compliance. The remaining 15% can expect to be ticketed on a regular basis until they get the point. Traffic calming devices help police by making the great majority of citizens more responsible.

Resident Review of Proposed Traffic Calming Scheme

A second neighborhood meeting was held on October 15, 1998 at the Kainalu Elementary School Cafeteria. About 25 people attended the meeting, including a representative from Council Member Felix's office. After a review of the information developed following the previous workshop, Michael Wallwork presented a proposed traffic-calming scheme for Kihapai and Kaha Streets. These two streets were chosen for a detailed design because the Coconut Grove area was too large to treat fully as a traffic calming scheme, nor does the City have the finances to construct all of the devices that would be necessary to treat such a large area fully. If only those devices that were identified in the initial workshop were installed, the impact over the area would have been minimal because they were too widely scattered to have a significant impact.

The above two streets were presented to the public for consideration as a demonstration project for the first phase of the neighborhood traffic calming program. After the discussion, a vote was taken and the recommendations below were overwhelmingly approved.

Recommended Traffic Calming Scheme

Kaha Street

1. Install speed tables north of Kaimake LP and south of Kaipiha Street as shown on the plans in Appendix A.

   Expectation: Lower vehicular speeds due to the vertical deflection created.

2. Kaha/Kainalu Streets intersection. Replace 4-Way Stop signs with a roundabout.

   Expectation: A reduction in the speed of all vehicles, safer crossings for all roadway users, elimination of drivers who fail to stop at the stop signs, and a more attractive intersection.

Kihapai Street

1. Install a median around the curve on the eastern end of Kihapai Street.

   Expectation: A reduction in the speed of vehicles travelling around and who cut-the-corner. If landscaped, a prettier street.

2. Mark a continuous parking lane line along the north side of the street and install a series of tree wells/bulbouts at regular intervals to stop drivers from using it as a passing lane.

   Expectation: Residents will be encouraged to park on the road and not on the grass area. Therefore, pedestrians will no longer have to walk on the road. Lower vehicular speeds due to the narrower street and the trees in the tree wells that will visually narrow the street.

3. Install speed tables east of Kawainui Street and another east of Halela Street to replace the existing marked crossings.

   Expectation: Both speed tables are expected to decrease the speed of all vehicles and provide pedestrians with a safer crossing of Kihapai Street due to the vertical deflection created by the speed tables.

4. Install a median with bulbouts west of Auwai Street and Puna'a Street.

   Expectation: A significant reduction in vehicular speeds at both locations because drivers will no longer have a straight vehicular path.

5. Install an angled slow point with median east of Kaiemi Street.

   Expectation: A significant reduction in the speed of all vehicles because of the horizontal deflection created by the design of the slow point.

5. Install a roundabout at the intersection of Kihapai and Kāha Streets.

   Expectation: This roundabout will slow all vehicles and provide a safer area for all users. It will also help reduce congestion occurring at this intersection when a large number of people are use the nearby soccer fields.

Overall Expectation:

The combination of all of these devices are expected to reduce vehicular speeds, make the street safer for all users, and add to the area's attractiveness. Resident support is required to ensure that motorists park correctly on the paved portion of the street rather than on the grass edge and to ensure that the landscaping is maintained. As one resident said at the meeting, there is a likelihood that because the street will be prettier and more pleasant to drive, there may be an increase in traffic along Kihapai Street. While that is a possibility, it should be pointed out that these drivers would be driving at slower speeds.